



"The breath is exhaled with the sound sa and inhaled with the sound ha. Therefore the empirical individual always repeats the mantra haṁsaḥ. Throughout the day and night, he repeats this mantra 21,600 times. Such a japa (repetition of the mantra) of the goddess (Gāyatrī) has been prescribed which is quite easy for the wise, and difficult for the ignorant."¹

"The mantra haṁsaḥ is repeated by every living being automatically in every round of expiration-inspiration. Normally it is repeated 21,600 times a day. Since the outgoing and incoming breaths repeat this naturally, automatically without any effort on any body's part, it is known as ajapā-japa i.e. a repetition of the mantra that is going on naturally without any body's repeating it."²

1 Kṣemarāja, 10th century, commentary on Siva Sūtras.

2 J. Singh, Siva Sūtras, p.xl.

Because the mantra is the surest means in these latter ages of attaining liberation, and thereby, to reach to the highest knowledge, Basyoo adroitly formulated the hokku as a mantra-- the ya-kana representing the bijas, and the talk about the seasonal word representing an underlying, basic mantra such as the one in 17 syllables given above. The efficacy and power of mantra-- because it is made of perfectly genuine words-- is illimitable. Even without knowing their meaning, the mere repetition will bring one closer to grasping the full import. In the case of haiku, one should get to see under the seasonal circumstance the vital energy forces which they represent.

For all these reasons, to make a hokku is almost impossible without the practise of some form of yoga. However, that, too, has been skillfully designed into the hokku, so that if one tries to make one, one is forced to^{practise} yoga. Beginners should memorize good ku and repeat them long enough to taste them and know the power of their words.

They should see how the hokku contains: 1) time-space-motion, 2) ^{four to five idea} units, 3) circuit of the seasons, 4) the actuality of the objects, 5) playfulness and roughness. It is better not to make ku while looking at the kigo, because this tends to limit the ku to a mere description. If one sits in a quiet place, the heart is able to be still. Another good way is to write, as they did in the old days, with fellow companions who are practising the same road.

"Spit out a few hundred ku and get one from them. The main thing is to keep the dai in mind, throw out ideas of old and new and think with an easy mind."¹

¹ South-North New Conversations, Nan'boku Sin'wa, ed. by Kyuuroan' Ryootei, 1745. a record of explanations of haikai by Kiin' (1700-1750) who studied with Hokusai, Sikoo and Otuyuu, and his disciple Bakusui (1718-83).

For the rest we should follow the words of the old teachers and masters:

"One should realize the heart in its lofty place and return to the common, was his teaching. He said we should always ^{and press} urge /ourselves the realization of huuga and then return to the haikai we do now. Those who always abide in huuga will have no difficulties in what they write ^{naturally} about, because what they think in their hearts will/take form in things, and the form of the ku ^{fixed} accordingly. If the colour of the heart is not beautiful, they will try to superficially be clever with words. This is the common practise of those who do not blame their own hearts. To practise genuineness means to search out the thoughts (hearts) of people of old, and nearby, to know the heart of the teacher. If one does not know his heart, in groping the way there will be no road of genuineness. To know his heart is to chase after the teacher's writings, know them well and then correct one's own heart so that one is able to attain to it himself. Sometimes it happens that without making one's own heart one with the line of thought of the teacher, one only rejoices personally at the teacher's road, makes believe one is going through that gate, but goes only a personal road. Disciples ^{back} should well look/at themselves and correct themselves. When the Teacher said to learn of pine trees from the pine trees, and of bamboo from the bamboo, he meant to separate from the personal self. This 'learn' is to enter into things and perceive ^{their fine subtleness}--that is where a ku is made."¹

And, "Depending on the one word makoto (genuineness) there is the difference between a master and a beginner."²

1 Akazoosi, ed. by Tohoo.

2 Uyamuya-no seki; there are various accounts of the writer of this hairon'-- Basyoo, Sikoo, Sen'na.